

III. REMARKS

1. Claim 38 is amended to correct its claim dependency from "38" to claim 1.
2. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication of the allowability of claims 1-7, 9-13 and 37 and 39.
3. Regarding the rejection of claims 26-36 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sumizawa in view of Sumner, and Goss in view of Sumner, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner's reconsideration in view of the following remarks.

It should be noted that the present invention as defined in claim 26 is directed to a method for outputting traffic information in a motor vehicle, i.e. to a traffic information system, but not to a navigation system as suggested by Sumizawa.

In particular, the navigation system taught by Sumizawa outputs traffic information only in the case where the traffic jam or traffic congestion is on the recommended route that has been set. Thus, the number of traffic messages is drastically reduced compared with the number of traffic messages related to a certain region, so that there is no specific need to further reduce the number of traffic messages intended to be output.

Sumner correlates the vehicle position and a traffic jam position with cells of areas. A cell is defined by the vehicle travel direction and major arteries in the area of the vehicle travel.

In contrast, the present invention is related to a traffic information method that is used independently from a navigation system. Therefore, it is not only necessary to reduce the number of traffic messages to be output to the driver of a vehicle, but

also to put these messages into an order of importance so that not only those traffic messages are output to the user that are relevant to a certain route but also those traffic messages that are related with parallel routes that might be used as a detour in case a route the user is intended to use is blocked.

Thus, according to the present invention the driver of a vehicle is informed about the traffic situation ahead so that he can select a route that is not affected, or less affected, by traffic congestion. For example, claim 26 recites detecting a first direction of travel of the motor vehicle, detecting whether the traffic message is significant for a current direction of travel or for an opposite direction of travel, and outputting messages that are relevant to the current direction of travel.

Since the traffic messages are sorted in accordance to the distances between the location of the traffic message and the vehicle in question and since the traveling direction is taken in to account, the driver of a vehicle will be quickly and reliably informed about the traffic situation.

However, these features described above are not disclosed or suggested by Sumizawa and Sumner. In Sumizawa, the received traffic information on traffic jams must be on the recommended route that has been set, not necessarily the current direction or opposite direction of travel as in Applicant's invention. Only if the traffic jam is on the recommended route is the distance from the current position to the tail end of the traffic jam reported. (See e.g. Abstract). Sumner reports congestion information with regard to the proximity of the vehicle, and not a current direction of travel or an opposite direction of travel.

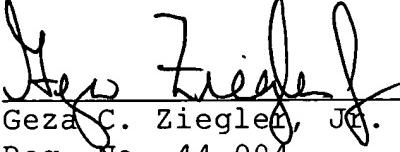
Since neither Sumizawa nor Sumner detects whether the messages are significant for a current direction of travel or an opposite direction of travel, their combination cannot. Thus, claims 26-36 should be allowable.

4. Claims 26-36 are not unpatentable over Goss in view of Sumner. The arguments recited above are equally applicable here. Goss can select traffic messages on the basis of a transmitted position. (Col. 2, lines 50-53). However, nothing in Goss discloses or suggests detecting whether the traffic message is significant for a current direction of travel or for an opposite direction of travel, and outputting only traffic messages that are relevant to the current direction of travel. As noted previously, these recited features are also not disclosed by Sumner. Therefore, claims 26-36 should be allowable over the combination of Goss and Sumner under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record, and are in proper form for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issues remain, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of \$110 for a one-month extension of time as well as any fees associated with this communication or credit any over payment to Deposit Account No. 16-1350.

Respectfully submitted,



Geza C. Ziegler, Jr.
Reg. No. 44,004

8 July 2004
Date

Perman & Green, LLP
425 Post Road
Fairfield, CT 06824
(203) 259-1800 Ext. 134
Customer No.: 2512

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Date: July 8, 2004

Signature: Laura Perez